SEQUOIA NOTES

Today's Sequoia Message…

Reading Scripture
Shawn Woods
November 1, 2026



Matthew 5:17-20 (NLT): "17 Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose.
18 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved.
19 So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God's law and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.
20 But I warn you – unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of the religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!"

In all cases, Jesus can say that he is not abolishing the law but accomplishing their purpose because:

1. As it relates to ceremonial law, he <u>became</u> the offering that was required.

2. As it relates to civil law, Jesus encouraged his followers to be salt and light to other nations. Meaning don't self-isolate but get out and mingle. And while you there, living with them, "give to Ceasar what is Ceasars", meaning follow their civil laws.

3. As it relates to moral law, Jesus did not just double down on what he said was right and wrong, but he also started the process of <u>changing</u> us at our <u>core</u> so that we could truly do as he did.

Matthew 5:21: "You have heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgement.' But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgement."

- **What is <u>deep</u> in my <u>heart</u> is <u>forming</u> me into someone. But is it the someone that I want to be formed into?**

Matthew 5:20 "But I warn you – unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

"God's dikaiosyne is not an attribute but a power, namely a power that brings salvation to pass". – Fleming Rutledge

- **Jesus wants you to make the world <u>better</u> and <u>brighter</u>. And he is <u>transforming</u> you into the person who can in fact take all that is beautiful in the library of Scripture and make it your reality.**

- **We often read Scripture for <u>information</u> when we should read it for <u>formation.</u>**

1) Read Scripture to <u>admire</u>.

"We can't recalibrate the heart from the top down, through merely informational measures... the orientation of the heart happens from the bottom up, through the formation of our habits of desire. Learning to love God takes practice" – James K. A. Smith

- **You do not <u>think</u> your way into loving someone. You <u>practice</u> your way into it.**

2) Read Scripture to <u>obey</u>.

Big idea: God is <u>rectifying</u> you as you <u>retrain</u> your desires by <u>reading</u> Scripture.

The Translation of the Bible Scriptures used today is the

Sequoia Impact Communities are where we live out our identity as a Family of Servants on Mission.

To get plugged in email:

impactcommunities@sequoiachurch.org

Reading Scripture
#6 of 9 - November 1, 2026

1) What did you find interesting or helpful about this message on “Reading Scripture”

2) Read Matthew 5:17-21. What stands out to you about what Jesus is teaching as it relates to fulfilling the Old Testament Law? What does He mean by “a righteousness better than that of the Pharisees”?

3) Growing up, how did your family regard the Bible? What is your primary feeling about Scripture? Fear? Desire for more? Shame? Ambivalence?

4) How do you see Scripture as a part of your apprenticeship to Jesus?

5) Watch Session 1 - Reading Scripture (Practicing The Way - Scripture Course).
https://launch.practicingtheway.org/experiences/scripture

6) What was one insight from the teaching you want to carry with you this coming week?

7) Do you resonate more with reading Scripture for information or formation? Why?

8) Would you consider yourself more of a left-brain person (analytical, rational) or right-brain person (intuitive, symbolic)? How has that impacted the way you read Scripture?

9) What’s the primary obstacle you face to the regular reading of Scripture (e.g., time, your sleep habits, parenting, work schedule, intellectual questions, emotional triggers)? How can you grow in this area?

Download the Scripture Guide from Practicing The Way for more resources.

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